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ABSTRACT

In a comparative survey of the perceptions of community college presidents and board chairmen regarding assumptions and techniques employed by presidents in relating with their boards of trustees, 99 presidents and 38 trustees responded from a national sample of 142 and 55, respectively. The presidents' responses indicated that the average board numbered 10.7 members, with one to three ethnic members (58%) and one to three women (78%). Boards met an average 11.5 times per year, with members serving 4.5 years. Both presidents and trustees agreed that it was most important for presidents to provide quality information for decision making, keep board members well informed, and provide written materials in advance for use in policy determinations. Both groups agreed that presidents should not conduct private conferences with individuals prior to board meetings, make statements which bind boards to certain actions, make use of social occasions to discuss problems under current consideration, nor try to influence the composition of the board. The questionnaire was answered by "do" and "should" responses, with less agreement between trustees and presidents in "do" categories. The document contains interactions of a fictionalized board meeting, interviews with a president and a trustee, analysis of the survey data, and ten fundamental principles for presidents and trustees. The questionnaires are appended. (RT)

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PRESIDENT – TRUSTEE RELATIONSHIPS: MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF LEADERSHIP

A Case Approach To Functional And Dysfunctional Assumptions And Techniques

by

Maxwell C. King
Robert L. Breuder

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FOREWORD

This publication results from the request of the Presidents Academy of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges to author a monograph which would address the broad issue of president-trustee relationships. Nowhere in our system of higher education are the pressures for change falling with such impact as they are upon the trustees and chief executives of community colleges. The 1970's are characterized by reduced financial resources, declining student enrollments, collective bargaining, government intervention in institutional management, and other equally pressing concerns. Each of these factors directly impacts upon human relationships and the educational programs and services offered the student and community. For trustees and presidents alike, the message is clear - - they must develop and maintain a relationship which draws upon each other's knowledge and expertise. There must prevail a sense of mutual integrity, confidence, and respect between both parties if the challenges which lie ahead are to be met squarely.

Through this publication, the authors hope to further impress upon community college boards of trustees and presidents the nature and extent of the relationship which must exist between them. The reader will have the opportunity to review, study, and evaluate the philosophy a president and his board chairman possess relative to assumptions and techniques a president should use when interfacing with his board. In order to compare their perceptions with those of the constituencies they represent, data collected through the completion of a survey questionnaire by 137 presidents and trustees throughout the United States will be presented and reviewed. In the final chapter, the authors present for the reader's consideration a list of fundamental principles presidents and trustees should be sensitive to as they undertake their educational responsibilities.

Those persons interested in a further treatment of this topic are invited to review the comprehensive bibliography presented at the end of the main text. This paper will not attempt to summarize the thoughts of others who have addressed this critical issue.

The authors wish to express their appreciation to those collegues at Brevard Community College who contributed to this publication: Patrick Smith, Carole Rushing, Kay Kehoe, Sherry Osborne, Audrey Austin, and Sally Larson. Special thanks to Brigadier General George Schlatter, retired, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at

Brevard Community College, for his candid and substantive responses to the questions presented him.

With the assistance of Mr. William Meardy, Executive Director of the Association of Community College Trustees, the authors were successful in securing an excellent response from trustees to the survey questionnaire. The guidance given by the following leaders in community college education with the respect to the content, format, and clarity of the survey instrument was also appreciated: Richard Ernst, Charles King, S.V. Martorana, William Meardy, Terry O'Banion, David Robinson, John Roueche, Raymond Schultz, William Shannon, Dale Tillery, James Wattenbarger, and Benjamin Wygal. The authors are also indebted to those presidents and trustees throughout the United States who took the time from their busy schedules to complete the survey questionnaire. Most importantly, the authors are grateful to the Presidents Academy and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges for the opportunity to address this important area of community college education.

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"I didn't wait for approval," President Hayes said, "because it would have delayed the project even more." . . .

Chapter 1

THE BOARD MEETING

The time: 2 p.m.
The place: Board of Trustees Meeting Room, Evermore Community College

When President Hayes of Evermore Community College entered the room, the five Board members were already seated at the long mahogany table. From left were James Gillis, the owner of the town's largest department store; John Sykes, an attorney; Mrs. Joyce Brown, a prominent civic leader; Tim Ledbetter, an insurance agent; and the board chairman, Larry Williams, an automobile dealer.

As soon as President Hayes took a seat at the end of the table, Chairman Williams called the meeting to order and said, "Under old business, do we have a progress report on the construction of the new Science Center?"

"Yes," President Hayes replied, "Mr. Biltmore of Athis, Biltmore and Cheney is here to report on that project."

Mr. Biltmore stood up and said, "Construction is running on schedule but will be delayed slightly because of a change order we issued several weeks ago."

"You issued a change order," Chairman Williams questioned, "what was that?"

"Well, the biology instructor decided he wanted built-in aquariums along two walls of a lab so he could establish a display of tropical fish for instructional purposes. It only cost $7,500 to make the change. I asked President Hayes if it would be okay to make this change and he told me to go ahead with it."

John Sykes said, "That's not possible. All change orders have to be approved by the Board first."

"I didn't wait for approval," President Hayes said, "because it would have delayed the project even more. I didn't think any of you would mind and that you would approve the change order at this meeting."

"Why didn't you poll the Board members by phone before making this decision?" Chairman Williams asked.

"As I said, I didn't think you would mind," President Hayes replied. "It seemed to me to be a valid instructional request."

"I make a motion we not approve the change order," Sykes said.

"Second the motion," Ledbetter responded.

The Chairman then said, "All in favor of the motion raise your right hand."

The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Mr. Biltmore looked dumbfounded. He said, "But the work is almost finished. What can I say to the contractor?"

"That's your problem," the Chairman replied. "In the future you best wait for Board approval before making changes in a contract price."

Mr. Biltmore glanced sullenly at President Hayes and then sat down.

"Is there anything else under old business?" the Chairman asked.

"Yes," President Hayes said. "Last month I reported to you that our College Site Committee had narrowed down the proposed sites for the new Glenmore Campus to five parcels of land. A week ago I sent all of you a sheet listing those parcels, their locations, and prices. I now recommend that we sign a firm option without delay for parcel A."

Chairman Williams looked agitated. He said, "When we discussed this three days ago, I asked that you not bring this before the Board until all Board members have the opportunity to examine all the sites and study the data on each site."

"I know," President Hayes responded, "but in my judgment we can't delay on this decision. The Faculty and Staff Committee has recommended site A and there is another possible buyer for that land unless we move at once. I think the Board should vote on this matter today."

"Who told you there was another buyer for that site?" Mrs. Brown asked.

"The real estate agent."

"I happen to know this land has been for sale for three years with no takers," Mrs. Brown then said, "so why the sudden rush? And besides, many people have told me that site C is a much better place for a campus."

"I don't think we should make such an important decision before we personally visit all the sites," Gillis said.

"That is exactly what I recommended to President Hayes three days ago," the

Chairman said. "Does anyone make a motion that we sign an option for site A?"

No one spoke.

"Very well," Chairman Williams said. "I then direct President Hayes to set a date as soon as possible for all members of the Board to inspect each site and then bring this matter back to the Board next month. Do you understand this, President Hayes?"

"Yes, Mr. Chairman, I will take care of it and then notify each of you of the date."

"The next item on the agenda is purchasing," the Chairman announced.

President Hayes said, "There's one item that came up at the last minute and wasn't in the advance package sent to you for study. I'll pass it out now."

Each Board member studied the paper for a moment, and then Chairman Williams said, "I don't understand. This purchase order is for dental lab equipment, and you recommend we accept the high bid which is $5,000 above the low bid. Why?"

"Well, I always take the recommendation of faculty members when it comes to the purchase of equipment. They're the ones who use it, and they should know best. Mr. Klein, our purchasing agent, can explain it to you better than I can."

Mr. Klein stood up and said, "Professor Quentin assured me that the high bid is far superior to the low bid and is much better for instructional purposes."

"Can you offer proof of that?" the Chairman asked.

Sykes said, "Is there someone here from the Dental Department who can explain this and justify our approval of the high bid?"

"No," Mr. Klein said, "but I could go now and see if I can find someone."

"That would take too long," Mrs. Brown said. "I have another appointment later this afternoon and I can't be delayed. These Board meetings should never last past the established time, and you should have been prepared to present justification when we

considered this purchase request. I move that we disapprove the purchase order until the next Board meeting and that you be prepared then to justify this purchase."

"Second the motion," Sykes said.

"All in favor of the motion raise your right hand," the Chairman said.

The vote was unanimous.

The Chairman then said, "At the last meeting we passed a resolution instructing the college attorney to immediately file suit against all former students who have defaulted on loans obtained from the college's internal loan fund. Do we have a report on the results achieved thus far?"

"We've taken no action on this yet," President Hayes said.

"Why is that?" the Chairman asked.

"Because I still don't agree with the Board decision on this matter. It will be practically impossible to find these students and it will be a burden on the college attorney. It will also cost the college more than it gets back in return."

"Do you remember, President Hayes, that the Board vote on this matter was unanimous and that you were instructed by the Board to make a progress report at this meeting?" the Chairman asked.

"Yes, I realize that, but I thought we could give it further consideration and possibly have another vote on it. This could be a very bad thing for the college public relations-wise."

"There will be no further vote," Chairman Williams said firmly, "and at the next meeting you will present a progress report!"

"Very well," President Hayes said, "if that's what you wish I will have a report. But I still don't agree."

"Are there any new items to come before the board?" the Chairman asked.

"I have one item," Gillis said. "As you all know, the city has proposed to build a new civic center on six acres of land bordering Clear River. There's been a lot of controversy about this although the project would become an asset to the business community. I move that this Board pass a resolution in favor of this project and present it to the mayor and the Board of Aldermen."

"Absolutely not!" Mrs. Brown said quickly. "That land is the only bit of wilderness property left around here, and it should be turned into a nature park. I am totally against this Board approving the destruction of this property for the sake of a civic center. There are many other places where the center could be built."

"I say that the Clear River site is the best one and that we should express an opinion," Gillis shot back heatedly. "Some of you conservation people are against everything that spells progress for the city!"

"Let's don't get excited about this," the Chairman broke in. "What is your opinion, President Hayes? You're a member of the study committee for selecting the site."

President Hayes knew there were other good sites for the civic center other than the Clear River site, and that Mrs. Brown was right. The river acreage should be turned into a nature park and thus preserved. He could probably change Gillis' mind but he didn't want to get involved in a difference of opinion between two Board members. He said, "I have no opinion on this. I think it's a matter between Mr. Gillis and Mrs. Brown."

"I say we pass the resolution!" Gillis insisted.

"And I say we don't!" Mrs. Brown hostilely replied.

Chairman Williams looked once again to President Hayes for guidance, but the President remained silent. He then said, "Is there a second to the motion?"

No other Board member spoke.

"Then Mr. Gillis' motion dies for lack of a second."

Gillis and Mrs. Brown glared with hostility at each other. President Hayes wished

now that he had spoken up and explained the advantage of the other sites to Gillis, but now it was too late to do so. And perhaps it was best for his own sake not to involve himself in personal matters among Board members.

Chairman Williams said, "If there are no other items to come before the Board, I declare the meeting adjourned."

* * * * * * * * * * *

This fictitious vignette tragically contains events representative of the kind which all too often transpire in the real world. History reveals that improper practices such as those portrayed in this short story have resulted in an adversary relationship between a board of trustees and their president. Instances can be cited where fallacious assumptions and inappropriate actions on the president's part have subsequently resulted in his dismissal. This fate need not befall a president and is obviously not in the best interests of the college community.

Although inexcusable, many presidents are so immersed in the day-to-day administration of their institution they fail to realize and appreciate one of their richest resources - - the board of trustees.

Chapter II

A PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Breuder: *Dr. King, what are the role and associated responsibilities of the president?*

Dr. King: I think the role and responsibilities of the president have been fairly well defined and are generally accepted. The president is the institution's chief administrative officer. As such, he is expected to implement and administer the policy decisions of the board. It is the president's obligation to formulate policy recommendations for the board to consider. Boards and presidents alike must be cognizant of the division of power which exists between them. They must keep foremost in mind the purpose of their job - -to make available the highest quality educational programs and services to the community and students they serve.

Dr. Breuder: *Have you seen instances where failure to adequately define and clarify the role and responsibilities of the president and board members has resulted in a dysfunctional relationship?*

Dr. King: There seems to be general agreement throughout the country on the role and responsibilities of the president and the board of trustees. The problem does not seem to be awareness, but rather the gradual encroachment of each party into areas for which it is not responsible. For the most part, this encroachment is not premeditated, but evolves unsuspectingly over an extended period of time. The increased occurrence of critical issues confronting the college too often provides the vehicle for boards becoming excessively involved in the daily administration of the institution. Another cause of role disorder seems to be personality conflicts

which emerge between the president and board members. These personality conflicts must be quickly resolved, otherwise they will have a debilitating effect on the president's effectiveness.

Dr. Breuder: *Is there a special role for the chairman of the board when personality conflicts emerge within the board, or between board members and the president?*

Dr. King: Yes, the chairman has a special role to play when conflicts at this level emerge. Generally speaking, issues which are not clear-cut and are of paramount concern to the institution are the source for potential conflicts. The chairman must assume the role of arbitrator when contrasting viewpoints surface between the president and board members. While differences of opinion may be healthy for the institution, it is conceivable that if left unattended, they will result in an adversary relationship between the president and board. At times, the board chairman will need to counsel with the president with respect as to how best to interface with members of the board on a particular issue.

Dr. Breuder: *In looking at the national picture, does there seem to be an increased trend toward boards of trustees becoming more actively involved in the daily administration of their institution?*

Dr. King: I think there is a growing trend in that direction. This is understandable in view of the fact that laws which govern colleges and their boards of trustees generally charge the board with certain specific functions. When these functions are taken literally by the board, the opportunity for role conflicts may emerge. For example, boards of trustees in many states must approve all personnel and financial actions, as well as building construction. In these three areas boards have the final responsibility on behalf of the institution. In reality, boards generally delegate these responsibilities to their chief administrator - - who, at a later date, will present appropriate recommendations for their consideration. In some instances, it is difficult for board members to accept presidential recommendations without seeking additional information through further questioning.

Dr. Breuder: *At what point should board members cease and desist from further questioning for fear of becoming too much involved in administrative decision making?*

Dr. King: It is becoming more and more apparent there is a fine line between what are and are not legitimate concerns of the board. In order for the board to avoid overextending itself, there must be a great deal of mutual respect and understanding between the president and board. Presidents who practice full information disclosure, who communicate bad as well as good news, who do not trick or surprise the board, etc., are likely to effect a board-president relationship relatively free of misunderstanding and conflict. Board members must continually monitor their behavior and actions lest they hinder rather than facilitate institutional productivity.

Dr. Breuder: *In pursuing this issue further, we know that in many states laws and regulations set forth the broad policies under which colleges operate. Can problems arise at the local level during the further refinement of these policies?*

Dr. King: Local policy determination, hopefully, is predicated upon broad state laws and regulations designed to govern the operation of the institution. Difficulties are apt to emerge in instances where state law/regulation is either absent or not fully defined and clarified. In such cases, the board of trustees will interpret the broad guidelines which do exist and effect policy decisions which, in their judgment, are in the best interests of the institution. Local policy determination is the product of careful deliberation by board members and should be based upon adequate data and sound information. Conflict within the board or between the board and its president can appear when the issue under consideration may have multiple interpretation. When this occurs, it is incumbent upon the board and the president to arbitrate existing differences and make appropriate policy determinations.

Dr. Breuder: *What sensitivities do you believe a community college president must exhibit if he expects a healthy relationship with board members?*

Dr. King: It is imperative presidents understand the rules, regulations, and laws under which the board operates. Where possible, presidents should place themselves in the chairs of board members to get a feeling for what it's like to be responsible for an institution, and yet be obligated to delegate the responsibility for institutional administration to someone else.

Presidents should be sensitive to the time demands placed upon trustees. Presidents must not give board members reason to believe they can more effectively operate the institution were trustees absent from the picture. Chief administrative officers who isolate their board from the college community can anticipate board suspicion manifested in excessive inquiry. Above all else, a president's actions must not cast a negative reflection on the trustees. Presidents must, at all times, project unconditional positive regard for the board.

Dr. Breuder: *What degree of importance do you attribute to communication as it relates to board-president relationships?*

Dr. King: In my judgment, verbal and written communication is the key to a quality relationship between a board and its president. It is necessary that open and free communication exist between the board and president. The onus should rest with the president to provide the board with adequate information upon which to make a decision. Relevant information is generally most effective when it has been summarized by the president. Information overkill should be avoided as it may have a negative response. Board members should always be given adequate time to reach a decision. Presidents should avoid asking for board action on items which the trustees have not had an opportunity to review and study. I am of the opinion that inadequate and/or insufficient communication between a president and his board is the primary reason dysfunctional relationships emerge and eventually result in a deterioration of institutional effectiveness, efficiency, and harmony.

Dr. Breuder: *Should presidents be sensitive to the acquisition and utilization of human relation skills essential in the administration of their institutions?*

Dr. King: There's little doubt in my mind that a chief administrative officer who does not possess strong human relation skills will be ineffective in the operation of his institution. Just as the ability to communicate effectively is essential in community college administration, it is equally important that presidents understand and master those techniques which enable them to closely interface with others. Institutional success will in part be determined by the degree to which presidents are able to motivate professional staff. Presidents must take time to understand the psychology of human behavior and use that knowledge to the benefit of the institution. For a board and president to operate at peak effectiveness, it is necessary that each has an unconditional positive regard for the other and that both are dedicated to the stated philosophy, mission, goals, and objectives of the institution.

Dr. Breuder: *What criteria should a president, such as yourself, use to determine whether an item should be presented to the board for review, information purposes, action, etc.?*

Dr. King: The key word here is 'sensitivity'. A successful president will develop a sensitivity which will guide him in any decision making as it relates to what, how, and when an item or issue should be presented for the board's consideration. In some situations a president is obligated by law to present an item before the board. This obligation comes from existing institutional policy or state law/regulation. Where guidelines or prior precedent do not exist, the president must decide whether it is in the best interests of the institution for the board to become involved in a particular issue. Presidential judgment is pivotal at this point. Excessive board involvement can be as hazardous as insufficient participation. There are many instances in which the board's involvement in, or awareness of, a particular issue can be of help to the president in his administrative decision making. It is generally accepted that board members want to be of assistance to their president whenever the need arises. Equally so, they do not want to get involved in matters which the president should be capable of handling.

Dr. Breuder: *What techniques have you employed to secure board understanding and*

support of a particular issue?

Dr. King: At our board meetings I always try to have informational items presented which may or may not be of general knowledge to them. During these information sessions, I identify activities and actions the board may have to concern itself with in the future. For example, in new construction I ask our chief college planner to make a ten- or fifteen-minute presentation to the board on future physical plant needs. During ensuing months, before any board action is required, I reaffirm those pieces of information which have relevance to a specific construction project. In this way, board members will not be called upon to render a decision without having the appropriate information. Also, we have a board policy which states that new policies must be deferred for a period of at least thirty days to ensure a thorough understanding of the issue being considered.

Dr. Breuder: *Is there a special relationship that exists between the president and chairman as it relates to securing board support and approval of a program, service, or direction college administration believes the institution should pursue?*

Dr. King: Yes, I believe there is. In most instances the chairman is elected by his board associates and is expected to provide leadership on their behalf. In presenting policy matters to the board for their consideration, I meet with the board chairman prior to the next board meeting to discuss the proposed agenda. It is through these meetings that I provide the chairman with the opportunity to raise any questions he feels the board may have relative to any agenda item. Most presidents will acknowledge their board chairman can and does play a pivotal role in helping formulate policy recommendations. One of the tenets ascribed to by most presidents is to avoid placing items on the agenda without giving trustees advance notice, by way of the chairman. It is not uncommon for board members to react negatively to recommendations if not given the opportunity to review and study appropriate information bearing on their decision. Earlier we spoke of the significance of possessing effective communication and human relation skills. Lack of quality communication and positive regard between the president and the board chairman can result in misunder-

standing between the board and the president. Such a relationship will have a pronounced negative effect on the operation of the institution.

Dr. Breuder: *When a conflicting viewpoint on some issue presented to the board surfaces between the chairman and president, what should be the president's course of action?*

Dr. King: There are several alternatives available to the president. In view of the chairman's concern or opposition to a particular item, the president may decide to reconsider the issue before presenting it to the board. This is not an infrequent occurrence as the board chairman may bring into consideration questions or observations which have been inadvertently overlooked by the president. Rather than present items to the board which have not been thoroughly researched and completely resolved in the mind of the president, it would be advantageous to delay further action until significant questions have been answered or appropriate information collected. Occasionally, the board chairman's concerns are such as to warrant the president's decision not to present an item to the board. On the other hand, there are times when the president, despite opposition from the chairman, continues to feel a particular recommendation is appropriate and should be presented to the board. Such a course of action is not inappropriate since both the chairman and president are clearly aware of each other's position and concerns. In the final analysis, any policy determination will be the responsibility of the board and not that of the chairman or president.

Dr. Breuder: *Once a decision is reached by the board, would you expect all members to support that decision?*

Dr. King: One would expect this, however, the reality of the situation reveals this does not always occur. In my eighteen years of working with boards of trustees in community colleges, almost all our decisions were unanimous. I can recall one instance when a decision of the board was not accepted by one of its members. That particular board member continued to pursue his point of view long after the decision had been rendered. He was responsible for generating open conflict among board members. This experience

resulted in hard feelings between college management and members of the board of trustees for almost two years. One would expect that a minority opinion following a majority decision would gradually dissipate and not surface as an irritant in future board deliberations. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Presidents must be equipped to cope with such situations when they occur. It is my opinion that once a board makes a decision, it should hold fast by that judgment and not reverse itself. It seems to me that a board which vacillates on a decision gradually erodes its own credibility and effectiveness.

Dr. Breuder: *What positive course of action did you initiate when conflict emerged within your board?*

Dr. King: The instance I have related had to do with the site selection of one of our campuses. One of my board members refused to accept the majority decision of the board and continued to put pressure on the administration to alter our recommendation. My responsibility was clear - - to support the board's decision. As this problem developed, it became apparent the dissenting member was not as much concerned about the location of the campus as he was about using this issue to seek reprisal for some personality conflicts he had with leaders in the community. Tragically, this board member lost sight of his professional responsibilities in order to secure personal satisfaction. As it turned out, he was responsible for his loss of effectiveness as a board member.

Dr. Breuder: *As human beings, we frequently make assumptions. In your opinion, what are some of the more common assumptions presidents make when interfacing with their board which may result in negative implications?*

Dr. King: At times, presidents interpret the viewpoints or sentiments of one board member as reflective of the entire board. It then becomes easy for the president to make assumptions which, during future deliberations, prove to be false. This, quite obviously, is a dangerous practice. Another failing of presidents is that they may miscalculate the board's knowledge of a particular issue. Such assumptions can have a debilitating effect and underscore the need for presidents to effect quality communication

between themselves and the board. One cannot overemphasize the need to provide board members with adequate information upon which to make decisions. Presidents should make every effort to involve board members in those activities which help them develop a better understanding of, and sensitivity to, the issues confronting the institution.

Dr. Breuder: *Is there the likelihood that presidents and boards, which have worked together for an extended period of time, might begin to second-guess each other in terms of the other's position or viewpoint?*

Dr. King: I suspect the longer a board and president work together, the more likely this will happen. On the other hand, board-president relationships constructed over an extended period of time help minimize miscalculations on each other's part. With time should come a natural rapport and understanding between the board and president. Problem areas may occur when there is a change in board membership. Presidents become accustomed to working with certain personalities on the board and may fail to alter their behavior patterns or strategies with new board members. It is incumbent upon the president to quickly identify the personality traits, habits, needs, and sensitivities of new board members and then do all he can to understand them. With the growth of confidence and respect between the new board member and the president, the likelihood of misunderstanding and conflict will be reduced.

Dr. Breuder: *Is it advisable for a president to establish a personal relationship with board members which extends beyond professional necessity?*

Dr. King: I do not think this should be a primary objective of the president. Personal relationships between a president and board members should develop naturally and not be premeditated. Mutual participation in cultural and social events can be of obvious benefit to the institution. As for myself, I choose to maintain personal friendships on a professional basis. I believe it is to the advantage of presidents to communicate with their board as a whole entity and not as individuals. I see nothing wrong with a president who participates in occasional social events with board members. I suspect a president who deliberately sets out to develop

personal relationships which extend beyond professional necessity will, in due time, place himself in an awkward situation on some issue. A president must be careful board members do not perceive a planned social event as a vehicle by which to precipitate a future course of action. It is through such errors in judgment that board members begin to suspect presidential motives. Ulterior motives must never be the basis for any social interplay with board members.

Dr. Breuder: *From your perspective, how should a president react or respond to allegations brought to the attention of the board which may cause a negative reflection on himself?*

Dr. King: Unfortunately, these types of problems do occur from time to time. When they happen, I would hope the board would share those allegations with the president as quickly as possible. The board should give the president the opportunity to study the situation, identify, and secure any information necessary to support his position and finally, respond to the allegation itself. This may or may not be done during open board meetings. Where and when this would be done would be contingent upon the nature of the accusation and the issue in question. An accusation brought before the board which clearly lacks substance should be dismissed. If there remains any doubt regarding the complaint, it is their obligation to bring it to the president's attention and let him take appropriate action. If the president is not astute enough to take note of trustee concerns and subsequently address them, he is merely setting the clock for future unpleasant encounters.

Dr. Breuder: *From your viewpoint, what obligations does a board have to its president?*

Dr. King: One of the board's obligations is to have a complete understanding of the role and responsibilities of the president. Having developed this understanding, board members will be in a better position to support the president as he implements the policy which they have determined. To function at peak efficiency and effectiveness, the college president must enjoy the board's respect, support, and commitment. Board members must at times be sensitive to the need for confidentiality and correct

timing. Board members should make every effort to become involved in the college community. I am not implying the board should become involved in the administration of the institution. I am, however, suggesting that for board members to fully understand and appreciate college programs and services, they must become involved. Additionally, board members should not be reluctant to communicate their wishes to the president. Quality communication, as mentioned earlier, not only places many issues in proper perspective, but serves as a neutralizer to potential conflict areas.

Board members have a duty to represent the public. Citizens comprising the college's service area must feel as though the board is communicating their concerns, needs, and viewpoints to the president and his administrative staff. Board members must listen attentively to the people, gather and assimilate information, and refer appropriate items to the president and his staff for reaction. Clearly, a president must earn the confidence, respect, understanding, and positive regard of the board. These feelings are not automatic and are the product of hard work, dedication, and commitment on the part of the president.

Dr. Breuder: *Some board members have expressed concern as to whether presidents are genuinely sensitive to their needs and viewpoints. Would you comment on this?*

Dr. King: Despite the fact there is no reason for this to happen, it does occur. Unfortunately, some presidents have not taken time to identify and understand the feelings and concerns of their various board members. Although inexcusable, many presidents are so immersed in the day-to-day administration of the institution they fail to realize and appreciate questions and contrasting viewpoints expressed by one of their richest resources -- the board of trustees. Too often, presidents clearly believe they have identified the proper solution to a problem and fail to accommodate the viewpoints of others. More often than not, this is not intentional but rather the result of too close an identification with a particular issue. Board members must feel they have an opportunity to identify and contribute to the goals and objectives of the institution. Additionally,

they must feel as though their counsel is desired. I can think of nothing more detrimental to a president who has developed within his board the feeling their input is token or not essential.

Dr. Breuder: *The board of trustees has a responsibility to periodically evaluate the college's chief administrative officer. From your years of experience, how should this evaluation be conducted so as to maximize institutional productivity?*

Dr. King: Let me begin by saying I believe there should be a formal annual evaluation of the president by the board of trustees. It is to the advantage of the institution and the president that this be a written evaluation. The instrument used by board members to evaluate the president should be developed by the board in concert with the president. Board members should be given sufficient time to study and respond to the instrument. In my judgment, it is the chairman's responsibility to summarize the written evaluations submitted by members of the board. Following this summarization, the board chairman may meet with the president to discuss the evaluation. Members who would like to discuss their evaluation with the president should be given every opportunity to do so. Whether or not the president's evaluation should be made public is a matter for the board to ascertain.

Evaluations can be very productive for a president as they are an excellent source of information in future decision making. Most presidents want to improve and therefore regard these sessions as a means by which they can contribute to their professional expertise. It is advantageous to both the board and president if periodic informal reviews are conducted. By this, attention can be given to minor concerns before they become major issues or problem areas. Also, occasional positive feedback to the president can serve as an excellent stimulus. It must be noted here that trustees should give their president the opportunity to communicate his assessment of their performance. Presidents may want to call attention to actions of the board which have hindered the attainment of their responsibilities. This trustee evaluation also provides presidents with the opportunity to inform the board of what they can do to assist him in the

performance of his duties.

Dr. Breuder: *With respect to the frequency, length, and content of board meetings, are there any fundamental principles a president should keep in mind?*

Dr. King: There are some practical guidelines to which a president should be sensitive. I personally believe any board meeting which goes beyond two hours is too long for all concerned. Meetings should be held at times convenient to board members. It must be kept in mind by the president that most board members are donating their services to the college. Generally, one meeting per month is sufficient. When major issues surface, it may be necessary to conduct special sessions. For the most part, the president is responsible for preparing the agenda for each meeting. During board deliberations the chairman, upon the recommendation of the board, may elect to place items for consideration on subsequent agendas. One of the pitfalls encountered by inexperienced presidents is their failure to restrict the length of meetings. The longer the meeting, the more likely the emergence of misunderstanding or role conflict. A well-prepared president will skillfully present items for board consideration. At times the president may want to present information for the trustees' edification. Such information should be informative and not be time consuming.

Dr. Breuder: *What factors, external to the college, are having a direct effect on the nature and quality of board-president relationships?*

Dr. King: There are a number of external factors which directly or indirectly impinge upon the relationship that exists between the board and its president. The increased encroachment of government in the affairs of postsecondary education must be of concern to those in leadership positions in the community college. We see this encroachment in a number of areas including veterans affairs, equal opportunity, collective bargaining, etc. With respect to collective bargaining, it is evident the state legislatures have directly influenced relationships between various groups in the college community. There is no doubt that the board's perception of the president will be influenced by the president's success in the collective bargaining process. The increased demand for educational account-

ability has affected the role and responsibility of both the president and the board of trustees. For example, demands for accountability in education expressed by the public have compelled board members to become more concerned about the operation of the institution. More and more they are being called upon to explain, and in instances defend, policies and procedures governing the college. Past experience tells us the more involved trustees become in an issue, the more likely contrasting viewpoints will materialize between the president and the board. Equally important is the increased likelihood dissension will emerge within the board on a particular issue. It has become apparent that the president must devote more of his time reacting to various stimuli emanating from the environment outside the college community. Clearly, the function of the board of trustees, as well as that of the president, has become more complex and demanding as a result of factors operative in our society today.

Dr. Breuder: *Are you suggesting presidents should provide board members with quality in-service education opportunities which will better prepare them to discharge their job function?*

Dr. King: I believe in-service education is essential to the prosperity of any institution. Board members themselves will freely acknowledge the need to periodically engage in professional development despite the demand it places on their time. Trustee performance is undoubtedly influenced by their knowledge and understanding of the issues.

Dr. Breuder: *In looking at the other end of the continuum, what factors in the micro-environment, within the institution, are having a visible effect on board-president relationships?*

Dr. King: There are a number of factors operative within educational institutions which, if not properly addressed, can result in a dysfunctional relationship between the board and president. For example, the perennial issues of institutional governance and academic freedom have resulted in the demise of a number of presidents throughout the United States. It appears to me these issues, and others like them, need to be placed in proper perspective and fully understood by both trustees and presidents.

Neither issue is bad in and of itself. It is when they are misunderstood or inappropriately approached that they are taken out of context and result in a conflict relationship within the institution.

Earlier we spoke of collective bargaining. Few would disagree that collective bargaining is one of the more difficult issues currently being confronted by boards of trustees and presidents in community colleges. At some colleges, the collective bargaining concept has been misunderstood and the process prostituted to the point where the adversary relationship between segments of the college community has grown out of control. In those institutions where collective bargaining is an issue, I suspect board chairmen would testify to the inordinate amount of time which they have been forced to devote to this issue. Educational financing, institutional governance, personnel management, and building construction are among the principal issues which consistently shape the relationship between the president and board. There is little doubt it takes a committed and competent president to function effectively in light of the myriad of challenges and demands continuously being placed upon him.

Dr. Breuder: *In looking back over your eighteen years as a community college president, what observations, advice, and/or counsel would you give your colleagues throughout the country?*

Dr. King: I can say with total certainty I could not have enjoyed my eighteen years as a college president any more than I have. Despite the fact I have been confronted with a number of problems both large and small, the vast majority of my experiences have been pleasant and have resulted in personal and professional growth for me. In retrospect, the problems I encountered were not the result of my relationship to boards for which I worked. I suspect the reason I have been successful in maintaining a good relationship with my boards is my acceptance of the reality they are the ultimate authority. As the college's chief administrative officer, it is my responsibility to implement and administer policy decisions of the board. Whereas the board's primary responsibility is the formulation of institutional policy, I recognize that the president has a role to play in this

area. It is those recommendations I make which often form the basis of the policy enacted by the board. I recognize there are times when I regard my knowledge of community college education as sufficient to operate the institution. I am quick to realize, however, no one individual should possess this responsibility and that it has been entrusted into the care of a board of trustees who speak for and represent the general public.

More often, presidents will need to carefully measure their actions and become sensitive to the multitude of forces which directly influence the composition of their job. The role and responsibilities of the community college president have become more complex. I believe this trend will continue and will place upon boards of trustees the added responsibility for identifying and selecting a president who possesses those skills, traits, and competencies necessary to ensure institutional growth and prosperity.

My observations of presidents who have been dismissed by their boards seems to indicate such action has not been arbitrary and capricious. Most boards give sufficient warning to their president if they believe continued action may result in a dysfunctional relationship. Presidents of community colleges should devote a significant percentage of their time to maintaining close familiarity with their institution. The many demands on the college president make this exceedingly difficult; however, failure to do so makes real the possibility that his efforts will not be consistent with the stated needs and goals of the college.

It seems to be more and more evident that boards of trustees are assigning greater importance to the identification and selection of the institution's chief executive officer. Equally, applicants for such positions are no longer willing to accept presidencies which have not been clearly defined. Attitudes such as these may prove to be healthy in the long run as they will provide for an initial basic understanding between a board and its president.

It is mandatory that a president and his board effect and maintain an open and candid relationship. Presidents and trustees who are committed to the institution's mission will, I am confident, work together in such a way as to minimize dysfunctional relationships and contribute to the strengthening and expansion of educational programs and services.

It is clear to me the board must convey to the president their confidence in him as the institution's chief administrative officer.

Chapter III

A TRUSTEE'S PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Breuder: *What are your role and associated responsibilities as a member of the Board of Trustees of Brevard Community College?*

Mr. Schlatter: The answer to your question is not clear-cut. There, no doubt, exist varied perceptions among board members as to their legitimate role and associated responsibilities. As a board member for seven years, serving as chairman since 1976, I perceive the role of the board to be that of formulating policy for the institution and providing the president with appropriate advice and counsel, either on request or when the board feels its involvement in an issue is to the advantage of the institution. There seems to exist in some board-president relationships an encroachment of the board into the administration of the institution. The latter, in my judgment, is clearly the responsibility of the president. For the most part, boards of trustees have delegated this responsibility to their chief administrative officers and, therefore, should assign equal authority to carry out those assigned units of responsibility. In looking at this question further, I believe particular issues and personality differences are the principal causative agents for conflict between a board and its president. I submit that a board chairman who takes his assignments seriously and a president who is sensitive to the role and responsibilities of his board will, working together, counteract or alleviate those issues or actions which have the potential for generating misunderstanding and ill will between the president and board. I must emphasize the point that boards of trustees should make every attempt to remain out of the day-to-day operation of the college. Quite simply, the board should set the policy and the president should implement it. I think, however,

board members should be provided the opportunity to communicate their feelings or concerns to the president if, in their judgment, the president has not interpreted their policy decisions accurately or that he may be in error with respect to the implementation strategy.

Dr. Breuder: *I believe I hear you saying there are times when trustees may need to become involved in the administration of the institution. Is this true?*

Mr. Schlatter: Yes, these instances do occur from time to time. I would hope, however, they are very infrequent. It seems to me if a board frequently feels the need to involve itself in the administration of the institution, which is the normal responsibility of the president, they should begin to review and study the effectiveness of their president. To be sure, there are special circumstances when a board decides that it is to the advantage of the institution if it becomes involved in administrative decision making. They must be careful, however, not to overextend themselves and become involved in those administrative matters which can be adequately dealt with by the president.

On the positive side, what I suspect is happening is that an increasing number of presidents who, secure in themselves, are willing to approach members of the board on matters related to the administration of the institution. Presidents recognize the expertise and institutional commitment of their board members and are quick to draw upon the same when in the best interests of the institution. Trustees must keep in mind, when they involve themselves in the administration of the institution, they run the risk of generating or compounding conflict with their president. It is incumbent upon the chairman to keep the president apprised of their feelings on a particular issue, thus giving him the opportunity to respond to their concerns, observations, or questions.

Dr. Breuder: *We often speak about the responsibilities presidents have to their board. What observations do you have as it relates to the board's responsibilities to the president?*

Mr. Schlatter: It is clear to me the board must convey to the president their confidence in him as the institution's chief administrative officer. Equally important, there must develop a positive relationship between the two parties. Lines of communication must be effected and meticulously maintained. Board members must relate in an honest and straightforward fashion to their president at all times. As you know, the board is obliged to represent the people in the community served by the college. To do this, they will need to ask questions and gather whatever resources they feel they require in order to carry out the duties entrusted them. Presidents must understand the role and responsibilities of the board and must do all they can to facilitate the board's carrying out of its assignment.

Board members must be capable of giving their chief administrative officer the respect and assistance required to manage the institution. There must exist a sense of mutual integrity among all concerned. It is incumbent upon the board to create an environment in which the president does not feel excessively threatened. The word 'excessively' is important here. A setting negatively charged with suspicion, hostility, etc., will almost certainly result in a dysfunctional relationship between the board and president. On the other hand, board members should be able to make observations and recommendations without feeling as though they have intimidated the president.

The complexity of the presidency requires a board which is supportive and genuinely interested in the welfare and continued growth of the institution. In my judgment, most community colleges are fortunate in having a board of trustees since they frequently contribute to the broadening of the president's capabilities. I am certain most board members welcome an occasional visit by their president for the purpose of seeking advice and counsel relative to an impending administrative decision. Operating an educational institution is not an easy task and requires the combined efforts of all segments of the community - - including the trustees.

Dr. Breuder: *As Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Brevard Community College, do*

you see yourself as having a special role and associated responsibilities?

Mr. Schlatter: Yes, most definitely. I think the primary responsibility for board leadership falls on the shoulders of the chairman. Quite obviously, he plays a principal role in the content, conduct, and format of all board meetings. More than any other board member, the chairman must develop a close working relationship with the president. It is through the chairman that the president will, quite frequently, communicate his observations and recommendations. Operating in a positive vein, the chairman must communicate to the president, as necessary, the feelings and sensitivities of his colleagues. The chairman can play a very instrumental role in helping the president to identify programs and services which will benefit the institution.

In some instances, the chairman must assume the role of arbitrator when contrasting viewpoints appear among board members or between the board and president. Significant conflicts, if left unattended, will, I am confident, result in a stress relationship between the involved parties. Most board chairmen are able to recount stories which deal with complaints or allegations expressed by members of the local community. The manner in which the chairman handles such incidents will in large measure determine whether subsequent misunderstandings, problems, etc., emerge between the board and president.

At times, the board chairman has the responsibility to represent the institution. For example, I think it is to the advantage of the college if the board chairman becomes actively involved in community college education at the national level. Knowledge gained and contacts made will most certainly benefit the institution. A board chairman, who is familiar with community college education and is cognizant of the problems confronting it, can be of immeasurable assistance to the president. An enlightened and understanding board chairman should not be perceived as a threat by the president. In my judgment, only those presidents who have been afflicted by the dreaded disease, insecurity, will feel threatened by the expertise the board chairman or board members have attained. Most community college practitioners will give

testimony that their board chairman has been instrumental in effecting a positive image of the institution within the local community and in influencing state government to qualitatively address existing needs of the institution. I think it is essential for board members, including the chairman, to actively participate in regularly scheduled in-service education programs. Policy formulation and institutional decision making are best made when a thorough understanding of the issues is at hand.

Clearly, the institution's viability will be directly affected by the quality and extent of the relationship which exists between the president and the chairman. Additionally, the degree to which the chairman carries out his special responsibilities and obligations will determine institutional quality. Board chairmen must be well versed in human psychology. They must be quick to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the president and then institute a course of action which draws upon the president's strengths and either alleviates or offsets his weaknesses. The board chairman should exercise firm leadership, yet provide every opportunity for democratic participation in the decision making process. A chairman who sits idly by and parrots whatever the president tells him is of little use to the institution. On the other hand, an autocratic chairman who is not sensitive to the participation of others and is self-contained in his thinking, can be equally detrimental to the college.

Dr. Breuder: *Does the board chairman have an obligation to challenge the thinking of the president on matters which will be brought before the board?*

Mr. Schlatter: I do not think there is any question but that the chairman must challenge the president if he believes what is being recommended has not been carefully thought out or is simply not in the best interests of the college. By way of restatement, the chairman and president must establish a positive working relationship. Operating within such a framework, neither party should be threatened or offended by reasonable inquiries.

Dr. Breuder: *Based on past experience, do you feel you have been provided with sufficient information upon which to make policy determinations for the institution? Have you had reasonable time to review and react to*

items which have been brought before the board?

Mr. Schlatter: No, of course not always. Presidents need to be aware of the other demands placed upon the trustees. In order for a board, which generally meets once per month, to carefully arrive at a decision, which will almost certainly influence the operation of the institution, it is important that the president provide sufficient quality information upon which to make that determination. Where possible, pertinent information should be summarized by the president. It is the board's responsibility to inform the president of the kind and amount of information they need and want. Prior to each board meeting, President King provides board members with a comprehensive folder containing, in addition to the meeting agenda, necessary supporting documentation relating to each of the issues which will be addressed. Board members have the obligation to become thoroughly acquainted with the folder's contents. I have seen, on more than one occasion, where board members, for whatever reason, were not familiar with the issues being discussed and therefore unqualified to decide one way or the other the outcome of the issue in question. Presidents would be well-advised to avoid presenting items to the board without prior warning. Trustees do not like surprises. Presidents and board members alike need to exercise care in making assumptions regarding each other's awareness or knowledge of a particular issue. It is through such miscalculations that misunderstandings frequently occur. I think it to the advantage of a president to meet with the chairman several days prior to the board meeting to discuss, in depth, the agenda. Occasionally our discussing an item results in a mutual decision to remove the item from the agenda or present it in a different fashion. There may be mitigating circumstances when the president, despite the concerns expressed by the chairman, continues to believe it would be best to present a particular item for consideration. I see nothing wrong with this as long as the president understands the end result may be a negative vote or a vote to table.

Dr. Breuder: *In an earlier conversation, you alluded to the board's responsibility to evaluate the president's performance. Would you care to comment further on this in terms of the frequency of evaluations, their content,*

and their potential value to the institution?

Mr. Schlatter: Evaluating the president is clearly a responsibility of the board. Few board members would disagree this is one of the more difficult tasks to perform. The extent to which a college president carries out his tasks will in part determine educational quality at the college. It is therefore imperative that the board periodically review the performance of its president. As I see it, one formal evaluation per year is sufficient. I occasionally make use of my meetings with the president to share informally with him the board's perception of his performance. There does not appear to exist a consensus among college trustees as to the most fruitful method to evaluate a president. In our formal evaluation, we ask him to prepare a comprehensive instrument for our consideration. This instrument is reflective of the Management by Objectives Plan he submitted for our consideration and approval at the beginning of the academic year. It is the chairman's responsibility, as I see it, to conduct a formal session with the president at which time we review and discuss the board's evaluation of his performance. This session is always conducted within a positive atmosphere and is intended to recognize achievements of the president as well as provide constructive criticisms which will hopefully result in increased performance. Trustees should avoid excessive or undue criticism of the president if they hope to retain his services.

Trustees accept the realization their assessment of the president cannot be accomplished solely through the completion of a formal measurement instrument. Appraising the president's performance is an ongoing process and should begin with his hiring. To sit down on any one day and judge the president's performance over the past twelve months is not only difficult, but next to impossible. At the risk of sounding trite, a board member's assessment of its president is almost instinctive. I am convinced that board members and presidents who work together over an extended period of time will gradually identify criteria which determine the quality of each other's level of achievement. As in all reviews, board members must make a determined effort to have their evaluations be as objective as humanly possible. It is incumbent upon

board members to apprise the president of those concerns they may have regarding his actions, which if not properly addressed, could result in a dysfunctional relationship. As mentioned earlier, presidents should be given the opportunity to respond to any concerns expressed by board members. The president must feel free to address the board in an open, candid, and forthright manner. An unconditional positive regard between board members and the president is essential to the welfare of the institution.

Dr. Breuder: *Is it advisable for board members and their chief administrative officer to maintain a close personal relationship which extends beyond professional necessity?*

Mr. Schlatter: I have long held one principle of high importance in my life and that is, 'The main thing in life is not to be afraid to be human.' There is much to be said, both pro and con, regarding the extent of the personal relationship which should exist between a board and its president. I believe it is important for board members to understand the president personally. Through occasional social and cultural gatherings, the president and board members have the opportunity to develop personal rapport and understanding. I would not, however, encourage presidents to have as one of their main goals the establishment of strong personal relationships with members of the board. Whatever personal relationships develop, they should develop naturally. The same can be said of board members toward the president. There exists, obviously, a fine line between personal friendship and understanding and the professional relationship. I see nothing wrong with a president sharing a social or cultural experience with members of his board. Board members are quick to observe, however, when a president is seeking a relationship because of an ulterior motive. Such action on the part of the president may prove to be counterproductive in the long run. Board members must remember they have been entrusted with certain responsibilities by the public. In order for them to discharge these responsibilities with the highest integrity, they must be free from excessively close personal relationships with members of the college community. It is not uncommon for board members to be placed in conflict when an adverse circumstance arises which

may necessitate termination of the president. Decisions of this nature are never easy, and are even more difficult if the personal relationship has grown out of hand. There must be a careful blending of personal relationships and professional integrity between the board and president.

Dr. Breuder: *On the basis of your seven years of experience as a board member, what are some of the traps a president should avoid when dealing with his board?*

Mr. Schlatter: In the case of a new member being appointed to the board, it is to the advantage of the president to call upon him either at his home or place of business. Through this action, the president conveys to the board member his interest in him as an individual and as a new member of the board of trustees. Meetings of this nature provide the vehicle by which personal rapport between the board member and president may develop. The president should make every effort to acquire as much information as possible about the board member's background, interests, sensitivities, concerns, and goals for the institution. Such information and knowledge can be of benefit to the president as he manages the institution. Meetings of this nature are equally beneficial to the new board member. As with the president, the board member must quickly come to know the president and the institution.

In my conversations with colleagues at various professional meetings held throughout the country, there seem to be some common errors in judgment which are committed by community college presidents. Among the more prevalent are: failure to provide board members with adequate information upon which to make policy decisions; failure to sound board members out on a particular issue before it is brought to their attention for formal review and action; making assumptions with respect to how members of the board will react to a particular recommendation; failure to involve board members in certain activities which would contribute to their understanding of and appreciation for particular issues; and, excessive effort on the part of the president to convince the board to move in a particular direction when it is clear they have serious concerns which have not been adequately addressed. By

and large, most presidents are astute enough to recognize they must be keenly sensitive to and aware of the concerns, interests, needs, etc., of board members. A wise president will spend a considerable amount of his time making certain the board can operate in such a way as to best discharge the responsibilities that have been assigned.

One word of caution to those presidents who have had a long relationship with their board. The frequency with which presidents take for granted the support of their board, and their willingness to second-guess the directions the board may elect to pursue, seems to be directly related to the length of the board-president relationship. Presidents need to be sensitive to what might be termed 'excessive confidence'. Tragically, it only takes one serious incident to undermine years of a fruitful relationship. Presidents would be well-advised to engage periodically in self-reflection to make certain they have not developed an overconfident or overbearing attitude. At the other end of the continuum, perhaps equally destructive is the president who, for one reason or another, has become complacent with respect to his job. Presidential apathy and lethargy are clearly counterproductive.

Presidents afflicted with any of the ills identified above must make a determined effort to alter their behavior. Board members must have, as one of their main concerns, presidential productivity. Productivity is not likely to occur in an institution if a president is besieged by dysfunctional attitudes.

Dr. Breuder: *Does a board of trustees have an obligation to actively involve itself in efforts external to the institution? By this I mean, should they become involved in the advancement of community college education at the national level and represent their institution at the state level?*

Mr.Schlatter: Realistically speaking, the degree to which board members are able to participate actively in community college education at the national level or represent their institution in state government will be somewhat determined by other demands placed upon their time. Some board members are simply not inclined to engage in such activities; others feel somewhat

ill-at-ease pursuing activities which they have heretofore not experienced. It seems to me there are times when it may be more productive for the institution not to have a particular board member represent the college. Despite these concerns, I nevertheless believe there is a very important part for trustees to play at the national and state level. As a group of people, they are very effective in communicating the needs and accomplishments of community colleges throughout the United States. Their mere presence at national and state meetings conveys to others the level of importance the institution has attributed to a particular issue. A board member's effectiveness is often enhanced by the fact that, while he is closely related to the institution, he is not necessarily trying to advance his own 'dream child'. In looking at the national picture, it is quite evident that a number of board members have distinguished themselves, thereby enhancing the position of their institution in federal and state government. The critical thing to remember here is that a president should identify those willing members of the board who possess the skills and interest to represent the college at the national, state, and equally important, local level. It should be stressed at this point that it is the president's obligation to keep the board apprised of educational trends and happenings which may help them more thoroughly understand community college education. Board members must have a frame of reference within which to operate. They are quick to realize their institution is an integral part of postsecondary education and, therefore, influenced by what happens at the national and state level. A president should at no time have the feeling he cannot approach members of the board with a request for their assistance. The president must have the assurance of his board that they would be willing to become involved in an effort which has the potential for improving the quality of education at the college.

Dr. Breuder: *Is it your feeling that most board members have a thorough understanding of the critical issues confronting community college education?*

Mr. Schlatter: I suspect most board members are aware of the many critical issues confronting community colleges. Many of these issues are certainly not unique to education. For example, collective bargaining in the community

college is rather young when compared to its association with business and industry. Whether in an educational institution, a major corporation, or a national industrial setting, long/short-range planning, fiscal accountability, public relations, personnel management, government involvement, etc., are all areas which must be addressed. By and large, educational institutions operate under the same principles and procedures as do other business enterprises. What is important here is that a board member devote whatever time is necessary to understand an issue, concept, etc., which has the potential for either directly or indirectly influencing the operation of his institution. Board decisions must be made only after thorough examination of the issues. The president has the primary responsibility for making sure trustees are adequately educated on those matters which have implications for the college. At times the president may share this responsibility with the board chairman. I believe this to be an appropriate sharing of responsibility and in the best interests of the college. A word of caution. Presidents should be careful not to inundate board members in excessive information and detail. From my experience, board members seek only that amount of information which will enable them to fully understand the issue being considered and, if called upon, render a decision. Presidents must utilize the limited time of board members as wisely as possible.

Dr. Breuder: *Is it your opinion that boards of trustees should actively participate in in-service education programs?*

Mr. Schlatter: I think it is imperative that board members participate, to the fullest extent possible, in in-service education activities which contribute to their knowledge and understanding of community college education. One of the best services a president can provide the board is to identify, recommend, and facilitate board member participation in professional conferences, seminars, etc., which have the potential for broadening trustee knowledge and expertise. As stated earlier, a well informed and knowledgeable board of trustees can only benefit the president. Board members who have been denied this kind of exposure may fail to recognize the nature and complexity of the issues the president frequently brings to their attention. A good president will make every effort to

provide in-service education opportunities at the local level. Presidents are admitting they have not done as much in this area as they should. Trustees are willing to acknowledge they need to make a more determined effort to participate periodically in credible learning experiences in order to acquire new or additional information.

In planning an in-service education program, a president must once again keep in mind the amount of time a board member can realistically devote to this kind of activity. As a board member for seven years, I have found professional meetings sponsored by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and the Association of Community College Trustees to be both interesting and helpful in terms of my professional growth. As chairman of the board of trustees, it is my duty to encourage and facilitate board member participation in quality in-service education activities.

Dr. Breuder: *Is there any advice you have for members of boards of trustees throughout the country with respect to developing and maintaining a positive relationship between the board and its president?*

Mr. Schlatter: In reflecting over my years as a trustee, I would say it is extremely important for trustees to establish quickly a high level of regard and understanding with their president. Board members would be well-advised to communicate, whenever possible, their confidence in, and support of, their president. The president who is secure within himself will be far more productive than one who operates under stress in an environment filled with excessive anxiety. This is not to imply that board members should avoid questioning or challenging the president for fear of offending him. Disagreement between a board and its president will not necessarily result in a dysfunctional relationship. Board members are obligated to carry out the duties and responsibilities that are entrusted them. Trustees must always be careful not to become captive of special interest groups. Board members must do all that they can to minimize misunderstandings and reduce the likelihood for conflict. I would encourage board members to take the time to come to know their president, both personally and professionally. I think an understanding in

both areas is essential to a productive relationship and will serve to benefit the institution throughout the tenure of both the president and individual board members. Board members must remain sensitive to the complex job being performed by their chief administrative officer. Both judicious criticism when needed and praise when deserved are positive aids to the growth of a president. Demands being placed upon the president, both within and external to the institution, have resulted in a noticeable turnover in community college presidents throughout the country. This must be of concern to all of us that have the welfare of our institutions at heart.

Clearly, the maintenance and operation of a community/junior college takes the combined effort and commitment of the board of trustees, the president, and all other segments of the college community. Change in higher education is occurring at a pace far more rapid than ever before. In order for community colleges to meet the challenges associated with change, a total effort must be put forth by all who ascribe to the philosophy and principles underlying the community/junior college.

. . . .there exist considerable similarity in the perceptions of trustees and presidents as they relate to techniques/assumptions presidents "do" and "should" use in relating to their board of trustees.

Chapter IV

A NATIONAL VIEWPOINT

In an effort to ascertain the perceptions of trustees and presidents as they relate to assumptions and techniques employed by community college presidents in relating with their boards of trustees, a survey questionnaire was designed (see Appendix A) and mailed to 142 presidents and 55 trustees throughout the United States. This Chapter will present a summarization of the data contained in the 99 usable questionnaires returned by presidents and the 38 returned by trustees. This represents a return of 70% and 69% respectively. [1]

Background Information

Presidents were asked to provide some general information regarding their board of trustees. Of the 99 respondents, 12% indicated they had five or less board members, 61% indicated from six to ten, and 27% more than eleven. The average number of board members was 10.7. Forty-two percent of the presidents indicated they had no minority board members, excluding women, whereas 58% had from one to three; the average was .85.

With respect to the frequency of women trustees, 15% of the presidents revealed they had no women on their board, 78% had from one to three, and 6% from four to six. In this case, the mean was 2.3. Twenty-two percent of the presidents said they conducted from one to six board meetings annually, 67% conducted from seven to twelve, while 10% indicated more than thirteen. The average number of board meetings per annum was reported as 11.5.

In the case of the length of appointment of board members, 60% reported their trustees serve from one to four years, 36% from five to eight years, and 4% with nine years or longer. The mean length of service is 4.5 years.

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[1] For a more detailed discussion of the procedure for data collection, please see Appendix B.

Forty-five percent of the presidents indicated they serve as secretary to the board; 100% have a board chairman and 73% a vice chairman; 60% of the boards are appointed and 39% are elected; 76% of the community colleges boards are, at times, permitted to meet in closed session; 15% of the presidents said their governing board was a state board, while 85% reported it is a local board; 64% of the boards do not have taxing authority; and, 89% of the boards do not have their own staff other than district administrators.

Results of Study

Table 1 on page 40 presents assumptions and techniques employed by community college presidents (as perceived by presidents, N=99) in relating with their boards of trustees rank ordered by "do" and "should" means and discrepancy factors. Presidents feel the three most important assumptions/techniques they "do" practice are: *offer reasonable recommendations for board members to consider*, # 20; *encourage frank and direct conversations between board members and president*, # 27; *and, keep board members well informed on the issues*, # 2, respectively. At the other end of the continuum we find that presidents are less willing to: *make statements which bind board members to certain courses of action*, # 34; *utilize local community leaders to influence views of board members*, # 42; and, *utilize external consultants to take "heat" on those matters likely to stir board and/or public controversy*, # 33, respectively.

In looking at the "should" mean rankings, the sensitivities of presidents begin to appear. Presidents clearly feel they should *provide board members with adequate time to reach a decision*, # 9. Additionally, they believe they should expend more effort *providing board members with sufficient quality information to make decisions*, # 5. It would appear as though presidents, for the most part, are satisfied with their decisions not to practice certain assumptions/techniques (e.g., #'s 42, 39, 37, 34, 33, . . .).

The last column of this table contains discrepancy factors ("should" mean minus "do" mean). It comes as no surprise to see that presidents feel they need to *provide board members with meaningful, regularly scheduled in-service training opportunities*, # 3. *Facilitating active involvement of board members in community college education at the national level*, # 13, and *providing for local, state, and where appropriate, national recognition of board members*, # 2, are two assumptions/techniques presidents believe they should practice more than they do. It should be noted that presidents are of the

TABLE I: ASSUMPTIONS AND TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED BY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS (AS PERCEIVED BY PRESIDENTS, N=99) IN RELATING WITH THEIR BOARDS OF TRUSTEES RANK ORDERED BY "DO" AND "SHOULD" MEANS AND DISCREPANCY FACTORS.

STATEMENT **	"DO"		"SHOULD"		"DISCREPANCY*"	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Factor	Rank
1. Clearly define role and responsibility of Board members.	+1.23	17	+1.67	16	+ .44	12
2. Keep Board members well informed on the issues, problems, etc.	+1.60	3	+1.92	4	+ .32	20
3. Provide Board members with meaningful, regularly scheduled in-service training opportunities.	+ .10	33	+1.44	22	+1.34	1
4. Provide opportunity for president and Board members to develop and strengthen personal relationships.	+ .90	22	+1.36	24	+ .46	10
5. Provide Board members with sufficient quality information to make decisions.	+1.49	8	+1.94	2	+ .45	11
6. Brief Board members prior to official meetings on issues which may be controversial.	+1.36	11	+1.63	17	+ .27	22
7. Provide Board members with opportunity to experience directly the college community (e.g. attend social/cultural events, meet with faculty, tour campus facilities, etc.).	+1.22	18	+1.68	15	+ .46	10
8. Provide opportunity for Board members to realize individual concerns as they relate to the college (e.g. institute a particular educational program to meet a community need).	+ .81	23	+1.17	27	+ .36	18
9. Provide Board members with adequate time to reach a decision.	+1.18	19	+1.98	1	+ .80	5
10. Provide necessary administrative leadership at Board meetings (e.g. serve as resource person).	+1.59	4	+1.79	11	+ .20	26
11. Provide Board members with opportunity to circumvent embarrassing decisions.	+1.00	20	+1.23	26	+ .23	24
12. Provide for local, state, and where appropriate, national recognition of Board members.	+ .60	25	+1.51	20	+ .91	3
13. Facilitate active involvement of Board members in community college education at the national level.	+ .17	31	+1.10	28	+ .93	2

TABLE 1. Continued.

STATEMENT * *	"DO" Mean	"DO" Rank	"SHOULD" Mean	"SHOULD" Rank	"DISCREPANCY*" Factor	"DISCREPANCY*" Rank
14. Accommodate, where possible, the personal needs of Board members (e.g. recognition, perception by others, etc.).	+ .80	24	+1.36	24	+ .56	8
15. Demonstrate to Board members awareness and understanding of the issues at hand.	+1.53	6	+1.69	14	+ .16	28
16. Respond quickly and effectively to questions from Board members, thus avoiding misunderstandings.	+1.45	9	+1.88	7	+ .43	13
17. Provide, where possible, for the exclusion of politics from the educational relationship.	+1.30	13	+1.62	18	+ .32	20
18. Serve as a neutralizer when conflicts among Board members emerge.	+ .55	26	+ .84	30	+ .29	21
19. Utilize expertise or special points of view to the advanatage of the college (e.g. institute new management information system).	+1.27	14	+1.63	17	+ .36	18
20. Offer reasonable recommendations for Board members to consider.	+1.77	1	+190	5	+ .13	29
21. Maintain viable communication links with Board members.	+1.44	10	+1.82	9	+ .38	16
22. Utilize college staff to support and clarify issues being considered by Board members.	+1.50	7	+1.73	12	+ .23	24
23. Utilize Board chairman to communicate to his colleagues the president's recommendations.	+ .30	30	+ .56	31	+ .26	23
24. Provide Board members with opportunity to understand the community college's unique philosophy and mission.	+1.49	8	+1.84	8	+ .35	19
25. Provide Board members with opportunity to understand and become involved in such crucial areas as: educational planning, community relations, legislative lobbying, accountability, professional negotiations, etc.	+ .96	21	+1.56	19	+ .60	6
26. Utilize Board members to communicate significant college accomplishments to service areas, state agencies, etc.	+ .41	28	+1.29	25	+ .88	4
27. Encourage frank and direct conversations between Board members and president.	+1.68	2	+1.89	6	+ .21	25

TABLE 1, Continued.

STATEMENT **	"DO"		"SHOULD"		"DISCREPANCY*"	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Factor	Rank
28. Utilize Board agenda to the advantage of proposed items (e.g. sequence of presented items).	+1.00	20	+1.36	24	+ .36	18
29. Provide, in advance of Board meetings, written reports of progress, background information, etc., which can be used by Board members in policy determinations.	+1.56	5	+1.93	3	+ .37	17
30. Encourage Board members to make suggestions to the president for study and consideration.	+1.31	12	+1.71	13	+ .40	13
31. Encourage and facilitate mutual trust and respect among (between) Board members and the college community.	+1.26	15	+ 1.81	10	+ .55	9
32. Conduct private conferences on substantive matters with individuals or smaller groups before approaching entire Board.	+ .31	29	+ .30	32	– .01	31
33. Utilize external consultants to take "heat" on those matters likely to stir Board and/or public controversy.	– .78	35	– .21	35	+ .57	7
34. Make statements which bind Board members to certain courses of action.	–1.27	37	–1.51	37	– .24	34
35. Initiate and structures contact between Board members and the college community.	+ .53	27	+ .91	29	+ .38	16
36. Convey to Board members the symbiotic relationship which exists between the president and the Board.	+1.00	20	+1.39	23	+ .39	15
37. Make use of social as well as official occasions to discuss problems under current consideration by Board members and president.	+ .12	32	– .02	33	– .12	33
38. Frankly reveal mistakes and failures rather than surfeit them with little and sometimes exaggerated success.	+1.44	10	+1.45	21	+ .01	30
39. Influence, where possible, the composition of the Board.	+ .01	34	– .07	34	– .08	32
40. Convey to Board members a constant flexibility of mind and a willingness to accept ideas.	+1.25	16	+1.69	14	+ .44	12
41. Seek advice and counsel from Board members on specific issues.	+1.50	7	+1.63	17	+ .13	29
42. Utilize local community leaders to influence views of Board members.	– .82	36	– .63	36	+ .19	27

*"Should" mean minus "do" mean.

**Response choices ranged from –2.00 to +2.00 on a five point scale.

opinion there are four techniques they should refrain from using, they are: *make statements which bind board members to certain courses of action,* # 34; *make use of social as well as official occasions to discuss problems under current consideration by board members and presidents,* # 37; *influence, where possible, the composition of the board,* # 39; and, *conduct private conferences on substantive matters with individuals or smaller groups before approaching entire board,* # 32.

Table 2 depicts assumptions and techniques employed by community college presidents (as perceived by trustees, N=38) in relating with their board of trustees rank ordered by "does" and "should" means and discrepancy factors. Trustees feel their president makes an extra effort to *offer reasonable recommendations for board members to consider,* # 20. They appear equally pleased their president *provides necessary administrative leadership at board meetings;* #10, and *demonstrates to board members awareness and understanding of the issues,* # 15. A mean of 1.43 can be interpreted as trustee satisfaction with the president's effort to *clearly define role and responsibilities of board members,* # 1. The same can be inferred from their ranking statement number 21, *maintain viable communication links with board members,* sixth in terms of significance.

Of special significance in this table is the importance trustees attribute to certain assumptions/techniques. A mean score of 2.00 makes it clear board members believe presidents should make every attempt to *provide board members with sufficient quality information to make decisions,* # 5. With "should" means scores all above 1.90, trustees are obviously telling presidents to adopt and use the following practices, respectively: *keep board members well informed on the issues, problems, etc.,* # 2; *provide necessary administrative leadership at board meetings,* # 10; *utilize college staff to support and clarify issues being considered by board members,* # 22; and, *provide, in advance of board meetings, written reports of progress, background information, etc., which can be used by board members in policy determinations,* # 29. As expected, trustees attribute considerable importance to maintaining quality communication links. This is evidenced in their response to statements # 15, 21, and 27.

Somewhat surprisingly, the largest disparity between trustee perceptions of techniques a president "does" and "should" use can be seen in item # 33, *utilizes external consultants to take "heat" on those matters likely to stir board and/or public controversy.* Trustees are also suggesting presidents give more attention to *providing*

TABLE 2: ASSUMPTIONS AND TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED BY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS (AS PERCEIVED BY TRUSTEES, N = 38) IN RELATING WITH THEIR BOARD OF TRUSTEES RANK ORDERED BY "DOES" AND "SHOULD" MEANS AND DISCREPANCY FACTORS.

STATEMENT **	"DOES"		"SHOULD"		"DISCREPANCY*"	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Factor	Rank
1. Clearly defines roles and responsibility of Board members.	+1.43	10	+1.47	18	+ .03	30
2. Keeps Board members well informed on the issues, problems, etc.	+1.66	5	+1.97	2	+ .31	18
3. Provides Board members with meaningful, regularly scheduled in-service training opportunities.	+ .32	31	+1.51	17	+1.19	2
4. Provides opportunity for president and Board members to develop and strengthen personal relationships.	+1.32	13	+1.43	19	+ .11	26
5. Provides Board members with sufficient quality information to make decisions.	+1.61	6	+2.00	1	+ .39	13
6. Briefs Board members prior to official meetings on issues which may be controversial.	+1.58	7	+1.86	6	+ .28	20
7. Provides Board members with opportunity to experience directly the college community (e.g. attend social/cultural events, meet with faculty, tour campus facilities, etc.).	+1.58	7	+1.89	5	+ .31	18
8. Provides opportunity for Board members to realize individual concerns as they relate to the college (e.g. institute a particular educational program to meet a community need).	+1.00	19	+1.57	16	+ .57	5
9. Provides Board members with adequate time to reach a decision.	+ .79	23	+1.65	14	+ .86	4
10. Provides necessary administrative leadership at Board meetings (e.g. serves as resource person).	+1.76	2	+1.95	3	+ .19	24
11. Provides Board members with opportunity to circumvent embarrassing decisions.	+ .87	21	+ .92	29	+ .05	29
12. Provides for local, state, and where appropriate, national recognition of Board members.	+ .76	24	+1.17	25	+ .41	12
13. Facilitates active involvement of Board members in community college education at the national level.	+1.16	17	+1.37	21	+ .21	23

TABLE 2, Continued.

STATEMENT **	"DOES" Mean	"DOES" Rank	"SHOULD" Mean	"SHOULD" Rank	"DISCREPANCY*" Factor	"DISCREPANCY*" Rank
14. Accommodates, where possible, the personal needs of Board members, (e.g. recognition, perception by others, etc.).	+1.03	18	+1.11	26	+ .08	28
15. Demonstrates to Board members awareness and understanding of the issues at hand.	+1.74	3	+1.86	6	+ .12	25
16. Responds quickly and effectively to questions from Board members, thus avoiding misunderstandings.	+1.47	9	+1.89	5	+ .42	11
17. Provides, where possible, for the exclusion of politics from the educational relationship.	+1.18	16	+1.51	17	+ .33	16
18. Serves as a neutralizer when conflicts among Board members emerge.	+ .43	29	+ .53	31	+ .10	27
19. Utilizes expertise or special points of view to the advantage of the college (e.g. institute new management information system).	+1.47	9	+1.78	10	+ .31	18
20. Offers reasonable recommendations for Board members to consider.	+1.81	1	+1.83	8	+ .02	31
21. Maintains viable communication links with Board members.	+1.61	6	+1.89	5	+ .28	20
22. Utilizes college staff to support and clarify issues being considered by Board members.	+1.68	4	+1.95	3	+ .27	21
23. Utilizes Board chairman to communicate to his colleagues the president's recommendations.	+ .68	27	+1.00	27	+ .32	17
24. Provides Board members with opportunity to understand the community college's unique philosophy and mission.	+1.43	10	+1.81	9	+ .38	14
25. Provides Board members with opportunity to understand and become involved in such crucial areas as: educational planning, community relations, legislative lobbying, accountability, professional negotiations, etc.	+1.29	14	+1.76	11	+ .47	9
26. Utilizes Board members to communicate significant college accomplishments to service areas, state agencies, etc.	+ .42	30	+1.38	20	+ .96	3
27. Encourages frank and direct conversations between Board members and president.	+1.37	12	+1.84	7	+ .47	9

TABLE 2, Continued.

STATEMENT **	"DOES" Mean	"DOES" Rank	"SHOULD" Mean	"SHOULD" Rank	"DISCREPANCY*" Factor	"DISCREPANCY*" Rank
28. Utilizes Board agenda to the advantage of proposed items (e.g. sequence of presented items).	+ .90	20	+1.19	24	+ .29	19
29. Provides, in advance of Board meetings, written reports of progress, background information, etc., which can be used by Board members in policy determinations.	+1.53	8	+1.92	4	+ .39	13
30. Encourages Board members to make suggestions to the president for study and consideration.	+1.16	17	+1.59	15	+ .43	10
31. Encourages and facilitates mutual trust and respect among (between) Board members and the college community.	+1.42	11	+1.78	10	+ .36	15
32. Conducts private conferences on substantive matters with individuals or smaller groups before approaching entire Board.	+ .74	26	+ .38	32	− .36	33
33. Utilizes external consultants to take "heat" on those matters likely to stir Board and/or public controversy.	− .32	32	+ .89	30	+1.21	1
34. Makes statements which bind Board members to certain courses of action.	− .49	35	−1.64	36	−1.15	35
35. Initiates and structures contact between Board members and the college community.	+ .61	28	+ .94	28	+ .33	16
36. Conveys to Board members the symbiotic relationship which exists between the president and the Board.	+ .75	25	+1.29	23	+ .54	6
37. Makes use of social as well as official occasions to discuss problems under current consideration by Board members and president.	− .30	33	− .56	33	− .26	32
38. Frankly reveals mistakes and failures rather than surfeit them with little and sometimes exaggerated success.	+ .81	22	+1.33	22	+ .52	7
39. Influences, where possible, the composition of the Board.	− .37	34	− .97	34	− .60	34
40. Conveys to Board members a constant flexibility of mind and a willingness to accept ideas.	+1.24	15	+1.72	12	+ .48	8
41. Seeks advice and counsel from Board members on specific issues.	+1.43	10	+1.69	13	+ .26	22
42. Utilizes local community leaders to influence views of Board members.	−1.41	36	−1.14	35	+ .27	21

*"Should" mean minus "does" mean.

** Response choices ranged from −2.00 to +2.00 on a five point scale.

board members with meaningful, regularly scheduled in-service training opportunities, # 3; *utilize board members to communicate significant college accomplishments to service areas, state agencies, etc.,* # 26; and, *provide board members with adequate time to reach a decision,* # 9.

There is little doubt trustees do not appreciate a president who either *makes statements which bind board members to certain courses of action,* # 34; *conducts private conferences on substantive matters with individuals or smaller groups before approaching entire board,* # 32; and, *makes use of social as well as official occasions to discuss problems under current consideration by board members and president,* # 37, respectively.

Table 3 contains ten assumptions and techniques, with largest discrepancy factors, employed by community college presidents in relating with their boards of trustees rank ordered by presidents' perceptions. A discrepancy of +1.34 indicates presidents believe they should do much more in *providing board members with meaningful, regularly scheduled in-service training opportunities,* # 3. Statement # 25, *provide board members with opportunity to understand and become involved in such critical areas as: educational planning, community relations, legislative lobbying, accountability, professional negotiations, etc.,* underscores the presidents' desire to provide trustees with critical learning experiences. From this table it is apparent presidents are sensitive to effecting quality communication with their boards and seeking ways to more thoroughly involve them in community college education.

Table 4 is perhaps the most interesting table. This table presents ten assumptions and techniques, with largest discrepancy factors, employed by community college presidents in relating with their boards of trustees rank ordered by trustees' perceptions. Trustees feel presidents should *utilize external consultants to take "heat" on those matters likely to stir board and/or public controversy,* # 33. As can be seen, trustees share their presidents' perception that they need to be provided with meaningful, regularly scheduled in-service training opportunities, # 3.

It is important to note the five statements preceded by a double asterisk, numbers 33, 3, 26, 9, and 25, also appear in Table 3. This indicates considerable agreement between both groups with respect to certain techniques presidents should rely more heavily on in relating to their board of trustees.

TABLE 3: TEN ASSUMPTIONS AND TECHNIQUES, WITH LARGEST DISCREPANCY FACTORS, EMPLOYED BY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS IN RELATING WITH THEIR BOARDS OF TRUSTEES RANK ORDERED BY PRESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS.

STATEMENT **	DISCREPANCY*	
	Factor	Rank
3. Provide Board members with meaningful, regularly scheduled in-service training opportunities.	+1.34	1
13. Facilitate active involvement of Board members in community college education at the national level.	+.93	2
12. Provide for local, state, and where appropriate, national recognition of Board members.	+.91	3
26. Utilize Board members to communicate significant college accomplishments to service areas, state agencies, etc.	+.88	4
9. Provide Board members with adequate time to reach a decision.	+.80	5
25. Provide Board members with opportunity to understand and become involved in such crucial areas as: educational planning, community relations, legislative lobbying, accountability, professional negotiations, etc.	+.60	6
33. Utilize external consultants to take "heat" on those matters likely to stir Board and/or public controversy.	+.57	7
14. Accommodate, where possible, the personal needs of Board members (e.g. recognition, perception by others, etc.).	+.56	8
31. Encourage and facilitate mutual trust and respect among (between) Board members and the college community.	+.55	9
4. Provide opportunity for president and Board members to develop and strengthen personal relationships.	+.46	10
7. Provide Board members with opportunity to experience directly the college community (e.g. attend social/cultural events, meet with faculty, tour campus facilities, etc.).	+.46	10

*"Should" mean minus "do" mean.

**Response choices ranged from −2.00 to +2.00 on a five point scale.

TABLE 4: TEN ASSUMPTIONS AND TECHNIQUES, WITH LARGEST DISCREPANCY FACTORS, EMPLOYED BY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS IN RELATING WITH THEIR BOARD OF TRUSTEES RANK ORDERED BY TRUSTEES' PERCEPTIONS.

STATEMENT ***	DISCREPANCY*	
	Factor	Rank
**33. Utilize external consultants to take "heat" on those matters likely to stir Board and/or public controversy.	+1.21	1
** 3. Provides Board members with meaningful, regularly scheduled in-service training opportunities.	+1.19	2
**26. Utilizes Board members to communicate significant college accomplishments to service areas, state agencies, etc.	+.96	3
** 9. Provides Board members with adequate time to reach a decision.	+.86	4
8. Provides opportunity for Board members to realize individual concerns as they relate to the college (e.g. institute a particular educational program to meet a community need).	+.57	5
36. Conveys to Board members the symbiotic relationship which exists between the president and the Board.	+.54	6
38. Frankly reveals mistakes and failures rather than surfeit them with little and sometimes exaggerated success.	+.52	7
40. Conveys to Board members a constant flexibility of mind and a willingness to accept ideas.	+.48	8
27. Encourage frank and direct conversations between Board members and president.	+.47	9
**25. Provides Board members with opportunity to understand and become involved in such crucial areas as: educational planning, community relations, legislative lobbying, accountability, professional negotiations, etc.	+.47	9

*"Should mean minus "does" mean.

** Statements also appearing in Table 3.

***Response choices ranged from −2.00 to +2.00 on a five point scale.

Summary Findings

On the basis of the data collected through the survey questionnaire, there exist considerable similarity in the perceptions of trustees and presidents as they relate to techniques/assumptions presidents "do" and "should" use in relating to their board of trustees.

Presidents rank ordered fourteen (14) of the statements higher in terms of "should" than "do". Trustees increased the number to twenty-one (21). Eleven statements were common to both groups: # 3, 5, 7, 9, 16, 21, 25, 26, 29, 31, and 40.

Presidents and trustees alike were clear in their feeling that presidents should not *conduct private conferences on substantive matters with individuals or smaller groups before approaching entire board; make statements which bind board members to certain courses of action; make use of social as well as official occasions to discuss problems under current consideration by board members and president; and, influence, where possible the composition of the board.*

In looking at the "should" mean rankings, both groups considered three techniques among the top four in terms of importance. They are:

- # 5 *provide board members with sufficient quality information to make decisions;*
- # 2 *keep board members well informed on the issues, problems, etc.; and,*
- # 29 *provide, in advance of board meetings, written reports of progress, background information, etc., which can be used by board members in policy determinations.*

It is interesting that presidents attach more importance to their *providing board members with adequate time to reach a decision,* # 9, than do trustees. On the other hand, trustees appear more sensitive than presidents in using *college staff to support and clarify issues being considered by board members,* # 22.

There appears to be a somewhat less agreement between the two groups on techniques/assumptions presidents "do" use. The two most noticeable exceptions are that

each group ranked as number 1 the statement: *offer reasonable recommendations for board members to consider,* # 20, and both ranked *provide necessary administrative leadership at board meetings,* #10, in the top four.

- Presidents and trustees are in much agreement as to what techniques presidents should employ more regularly in relating with their boards. Trustee in-service education is of high concern to both parties. This study underscores the need for meaningful, regularly scheduled in-service education programs for trustees.

Effect and maintain a viable communication network within the college community.

Chapter V

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

A comparative analysis of the perceptions of a community college president and his board chairman with the data collected through the administration of a survey questionnaire to 137 community college presidents and trustees reveals much agreement with respect to assumptions/techniques presidents "do" and "should" employ in relating with their boards of trustees.

The purpose of this study was not to convince the community college practitioner of the importance of fostering and maintaining a productive president-trustee relationship. Additionally, there was the realization that most presidents and trustees are aware of, and sensitive to, assumptions/techniques which contribute to a healthy and constructive relationship. What was intended was to call to mind those actions which should be practiced and underscore the effect they can ultimately have on the administration and policy determination process. The time for concern is now. There is a growing potential for conflict, misunderstanding, and recrimination in too many community colleges to be able to dismiss it as a temporary aberration or series of isolated incidents.

"Management styles and organization in postsecondary education tend to become embedded in tradition and habit as do activities in any other human enterprise. Yet today the winds of change are blowing cobwebs out of many a musty corner of entrenched systems and upsetting relationships of the past which have become so comfortable - or at least so familiar - as to seem to have the stamp of final legitimacy."[1] The long-standing stereotype position on board-president duties and relationships where a wall divides the responsibilities of each must be rejected. Boards and presidents alike must recognize the existence of overlapping responsibilities in such critical areas as policy formulation and

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[1] Francis Pray, The State of the Art of College Trusteeship (Arlington, Virginia: Frantzreb and Pray Associates, Inc., 1974), p.26.

institutional administration. Presidents and trustees share one major characteristic: they are the only individuals with a total institutional perspective. As such, it is their duty to work cooperatively, effecting decisions in the best interests of the college and community. Transgressions by either party can be expected from time to time. In a healthy environment such transgressions will not be negatively perceived and therefore need not be counter-productive. A positive relationship between a board and its president will unquestionably result in fewer problems coming before the board for formal action and, minimally, will condition the board to the problems and strengthen the chief executive's position in times of crises.

The following are some fundamental principles presidents and trustees should ascribe to as they carry out the charges assigned them:

Presidents and boards of trustees should:

1. Effect and maintain a viable communication network within the college community.
2. Identify and utilize available human resources to the best interests of the college and community.
3. Encourage and maintain a responsiveness to the needs and wants of the local community.
4. Maintain consensus as to the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the college and be dedicated to their attainment.
5. Collect and comprehend information necessary to qualitatively discharge assigned units of responsibility.
6. Understand and accept the primary role and associated responsibilities that are assigned their position.
7. Avoid those temptations which detract from the quality of their efforts.
8. Work toward the creation of a positive and productive environment conducive to institutional prosperity.
9. Recognize the existence of change and the challenges which are certain to occur.
10. **ABOVE ALL ELSE**, treat others with courtesy, concern, and respect.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaires Completed
By Community College Presidents
And Trustees

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

President – Trustee Relationships

The purpose of this instrument is to identify assumptions and techniques employed by community college presidents in relating with their Boards of Trustees (governing board).

General Information

Please provide the following information:

1. Number of Board members: _____
2. Number of minority (excluding women) Board members: _____
3. Number of women on Board: _____
4. Number of regular Board meetings annually: _____
5. Length of term of appointment of Board members: _____ years
6. Do you serve as secretary to the Board: _____ yes _____ no
7. Does your Board have a chairman: _____ yes _____ no, a vice-chairman: _____ yes _____ no
8. Method of Board member selection: _____ appointed _____ elected _____ (other).
   If appointed, by whom: _____
9. Does state law ever permit your Board members to meet in closed session: _____ yes _____ no
10. Is your governing Board a _____ state board or _____ local board.
11. Does your Board have taxing authority: _____ yes _____ no
12. Does your Board have its own staff other than District administrators: _____ yes _____ no

Informational Items

Viewed from your position as president, please respond to the following statements in terms of whether you "do" and "should" practice the assumptions/techniques specified (please note: two responses per item is requested). For each statement, circle what you perceive to be the degree of importance on a five point scale. For example:

	"do"					"should"				
	definitely don't	probably don't	irrelevant	probably do	definitely do	definitely shouldn't	probably shouldn't	irrelevant	probably should	definitely should
0. Offer alternative recommendations for Board members to consider.	-2	(-1)	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	(+2)

	"do"					"should"				
	definitely don't	probably don't	irrelevant	probably do	definitely do	definitely shouldn't	probably shouldn't	irrelevant	probably should	definitely should
1. Clearly define role and responsibility of Board members.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
2. Keep Board members well informed on the issues, problems, etc.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
3. Provide Board members with meaningful, regularly scheduled in-service training opportunities.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
4. Provide opportunity for president and Board members to develop and strengthen personal relationships.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
5. Provide Board members with sufficient quality information to make decisions.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
6. Brief Board members prior to official meetings on issues which may be controversial.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
7. Provide Board members with opportunity to experience directly the college community (e.g. attend social/cultural events, meet with faculty, tour campus facilities, etc.).	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
8. Provide opportunity for Board members to realize individual concerns as they relate to the college (e.g. institute a particular educational program to meet a community need).	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
9. Provide Board members with adequate time to reach a decision.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
10. Provide necessary administrative leadership at Board meetings (e.g. serve as resource person).	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
11. Provide Board members with opportunity to circumvent embarrassing decisions.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
12. Provide for local, state, and where appropriate, national recognition of Board members.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
13. Facilitate active involvement of Board members in community college education at the national level.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
14. Accommodate, where possible, the personal needs of Board members (e.g. recognition, perception by others, etc.).	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
15. Demonstrate to Board members awareness and understanding of the issues at hand.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2

- continued -

		"do"					"should"				
		definitely don't	probably don't	irrelevant	probably do	definitely do	definitely shouldn't	probably shouldn't	irrelevant	probably should	definitely should
16.	Respond quickly and effectively to questions from Board members, thus avoiding misunderstandings.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
17.	Provide, where possible, for the exclusion of politics from the educational relationship.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
18.	Serve as a neutralizer when conflicts among Board members emerge.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
19.	Utilize expertise or special points of view to the advantage of the college (e.g. institute new management information system).	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
20.	Offer reasonable recommendations for Board members to consider.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
21.	Maintain viable communication links with Board members.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
22.	Utilize college staff to support and clarify issues being considered by Board members.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
23.	Utilize Board chairman to communicate to his colleagues the president's recommendations.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
24.	Provide Board members with opportunity to understand the community college's unique philosophy and mission.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
25.	Provide Board members with opportunity to understand and become involved in such crucial areas as: educational planning, community relations, legislative lobbying, accountability, professional negotiations, etc.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
26.	Utilize Board members to communicate significant college accomplishments to service areas, state agencies, etc.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
27.	Encourage frank and direct conversations between Board members and president.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
28.	Utilize Board agenda to the advantage of proposed items (e.g. sequence of presented items).	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
29.	Provide, in advance of Board meetings, written reports of progress, background information, etc., which can be used by Board members in policy determinations.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
30.	Encourage Board members to make suggestions to the president for study and consideration.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2

- over -

	"do"					"should"				
	definitely don't	probably don't	irrelevant	probably do	definitely do	definitely shouldn't	probably shouldn't	irrelevant	probably should	definitely should
31. Encourage and facilitate mutual trust and respect among (between) Board members and the college community.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
32. Conduct private conferences on substantive matters with individuals or smaller groups before approaching entire Board.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
33. Utilize external consultants to take "heat" on those matters likely to stir Board and/or public controversy.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
34. Make statements which bind Board members to certain courses of action.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
35. Initiate and structure contact between Board members and the college community.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
36. Convey to Board members the symbiotic relationship which exists between the president and the Board.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
37. Make use of social as well as official occasions to discuss problems under current consideration by Board members and president.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
38. Frankly reveal mistakes and failures rather than surfeit them with little and sometimes exaggerated success.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
39. Influence, where possible, the composition of the Board.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
40. Convey to Board members a constant flexibility of mind and a willingness to accept ideas.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
41. Seek advice and counsel from Board members on specific issues.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
42. Utilize local community leaders to influence views of Board members.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND ASSISTANCE!

MCK/ccr

TO BE COMPLETED BY TRUSTEE

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

President – Trustee Relationships

The purpose of this instrument is to identify assumptions and techniques employed by community college presidents in relating with their Boards of Trustees (governing board).

Informatior.al Items

Viewed from your position as a member of the Board of Trustees, please respond to the following statements in terms of whether your president "does" and "should" practice the assumptions/techniques specified (please note: two responses per item is requested). For each statement, circle what you perceive to be the degree of importance on a five point scale. For example:

	"does"					"should"				
	definitely doesn't	probably doesn't	irrelevant	probably does	definitely does	definitely shouldn't	probably shouldn't	irrelevant	probably should	definitely should
0. Offers alternative recommendations for Board members to consider.	-2	(-1)	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	(+2)

	"does"					"should"				
	definitely doesn't	probably doesn't	irrelevant	probably does	definitely does	definitely shouldn't	probably shouldn't	irrelevant	probably should	definitely should
1. Clearly defines roles and responsibility of Board members.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
2. Keeps Board members well informed on the issues, problems, etc.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
3. Provides Board members with meaningful, regularly scheduled in-service training opportunities.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
4. Provides opportunity for president and Board members to develop and strengthen personal relationships.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
5. Provides Board members with sufficient quality information to make decisions.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
6. Briefs Board members prior to official meetings on issues which may be controversial.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2

- over -

	"does"					"should"				
	definitely doesn't	probably doesn't	irrelevant	probably does	definitely does	definitely shouldn't	probably shouldn't	irrelevant	probably should	definitely should
7. Provides Board members with opportunity to experience directly the college community (e.g. attend social/cultural events, meet with faculty, tour campus facilities, etc.)	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
8. Provides opportunity for Board members to realize individual concerns as they relate to the college (e.g. institute a particular educational program to meet a community need).	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
9. Provides Board members with adequate time to reach a decision.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
10. Provides necessary administrative leadership at Board meetings (e.g. serves as resource person).	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
11. Provides Board members with opportunity to circumvent embarrassing decisions.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
12. Provides for local, state, and where appropriate, national recognition of Board members.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
13. Facilitates active involvement of Board members in community college education at the national level.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
14. Accommodates, where possible, the personal needs of Board members (e.g. recognition, perception by others, etc.).	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
15. Demonstrates to Board members awareness and understanding of the issues at hand.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
16. Responds quickly and effectively to questions from Board members, thus avoiding misunderstandings.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
17. Provides, where possible, for the exclusion of politics from the educational relationship.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
18. Serves as a neutralizer when conflicts among Board members emerge.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
19. Utilizes expertise or special points of view to the advantage of the college (e.g. institute new management information system).	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2

- continued -

		"does"					"should"				
		definitely doesn't	probably doesn't	irrelevant	probably does	definitely does	definitely shouldn't	probably shouldn't	irrelevant	probably should	definitely should
20.	Offers reasonable recommendations for Board members to consider.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
21.	Maintains viable communication links with Board members.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
22.	Utilizes college staff to support and clarify issues being considered by Board members.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
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24.	Provides Board members with opportunity to understand the community college's unique philosophy and mission.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
25.	Provides Board members with opportunity to understand and become involved in such crucial areas as: educational planning, community relations, legislative lobbying, accountability, professional negotiations, etc.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
26.	Utilizes Board members to communicate significant college accomplishments to service areas, state agencies, etc.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
27.	Encourages frank and direct conversations between Board members and president.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
28.	Utilizes Board agenda to the advantage of proposed items (e.g. sequence of presented items).	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
29.	Provides, in advance of Board meetings, written reports of progress, background information, etc., which can be used by Board members in policy determinations.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
30.	Encourages Board members to make suggestions to the president for study and consideration.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
31.	Encourages and facilitates mutual trust and respect among (between) Board members and the college community.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2

	"does"					"should"				
	definitely doesn't	probably doesn't	irrelevant	probably does	definitely does	definitely shouldn't	probably shouldn't	irrelevant	probably should	definitely should
32. Conducts private conferences on substantive matters with individuals or smaller groups before approaching entire Board.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
33. Utilizes external consultants to take "heat" on those matters likely to stir Board and/or public controversy.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
34. Makes statements which bind Board members to certain courses of action.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
35. Initiates and structures contact between Board members and the college community.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
36. Conveys to Board members the symbiotic relationship which exists between the president and the Board.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
37. Makes use of social as well as official occasions to discuss problems under current consideration by Board members and president.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
38. Frankly reveals mistakes and failures rather than surfeit them with little and sometimes exaggerated success.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
39. Influences, where possible, the composition of the Board.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
40. Conveys to Board members a constant flexibility of mind and a willingness to accept ideas.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
41. Seeks advice and counsel from Board members on specific issues.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
42. Utilizes local community leaders to influence views of Board members.	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND ASSISTANCE!

MCK/ccr

APPENDIX B

Procedure For Data Collection

POPULATION

The population in this investigation consisted of all community/junior college presidents and trustees throughout the United States.

SAMPLE

A random sample of 142 presidents throughout the United States was selected for participation in this study. The researchers, King and Breuder, identified 55 trustees who they believed would respond to the survey questionnaire. It is the investigators' opinion, the sample drawn is representative of a total population; however, it is recommended that this study be replicated, using a larger sample, to validate obtained results.

The survey questionnaire and attached cover letter were mailed to the target population in April 1977. Presidents who received the instrument were asked to respond to 42 statements in terms of whether they "do" and "should" practice certain assumptions and techniques when relating to their boards of trustees. Using a Likert Scale, response choices for each statement can be seen by the following example:

		"do"					"should"				
		definitely don't	*probably don't*	*irrelevant*	*probably do*	*definitely do*	*definitely shouldn't*	*probably shouldn't*	*irrelevant*	*probably should*	*definitely should*
0.	Offer alternative recommendations for Board members to consider.	-2	(-1)	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	(+2)

Trustees completed a similar instrument. Because of the excellent percentage of returns, no follow-up mailing was necessary.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

SEP 1 0 1977

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES